

Message Text

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US NAVFAC ARGENTIA NFLD UNN

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS MARR CA

SUBJ EDITORIAL ON US NAVAL BASE AT ARGENTIA, NEWFOUNDLAND

REF ST. JOHN S 328

1. ENLARGING ON ITS STRAIGHT NEWS ARTICLE OF 12/22/75 RE ARGENTIA (SEE REFTEL), ST. JOHN S EVENING TELEGRAM OF 12/27/75 HAD AS ITS LEAD EDITORIAL, HEADLINED "ACQUIRING ARGENTIA", A REPLAY OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PREVIOUS ARTICLE INTERSPERSED WITH SPECULATION AND COMMENT. PARA 2 BELOW IS PARAPHRASE OF EDITORIAL.

2. SOME HACKLES RAISED LOCALLY WHEN HMG, AS PART OF WEST INDIAN BASES-FOR-DESTROYERS DEAL, TOSSED IN NEWFOUNDLAND BASES TOO AND WITHOUT QUID PRO QUO. CONCERN ABOUT 99-YEAR LEASES WAS MOSTLY UNNECESSARY SINCE MOST BASES REVERTED TO LOCAL CONTROL WITHIN 30 YEARS. US NAVAL-AIR STATION AT ARGENTIA, HOWEVER, STILL HAS SUBSTANTIAL COLONY OF AMERICANS AND EMPLOYS FAIR NUMBER OF LOCAL CIVILIANS.

OTHER BASES HAVE LONG SINCE BEEN TURNED OVER TO MUNICIPAL, PROVINCIAL, AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS AND PUT TO USEFUL PURPOSES. BUT ARGENTIA, BECAUSE OF SOME UNDISCLOSED USG POLICY, PRESENTS A PUZZLE AND A COMPLICATED SITUATION.

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ALTHOUGH SOME PORTIONS OF BASE HAVE BEEN ADAPTED FOR LOCAL

USE, POTENTIAL LATENT IN PORT FACILITIES, BUILDINGS, AND AIRPORT REMAINS IN LIMBO BECAUSE OF LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT AMERICANS HAVE IN MIND FOR ONCE-BUSY BASE. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTER LUNDRIGAN IS LATEST ONE TO MENTION THIS. ALTHOUGH AMERICANS HAVE MOVED OFF NORTH SIDE OF BASE, THEY HAVE NOT RELEASED IT. COMPANIES NOW OPERATING THERE ARE DOING SO UNDER TERMS "COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE" FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT. IT IMPERATIVE THAT PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT GAIN ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL OF THIS PART OF BASE AND LUNDRIGAN PLANNING DISCUSS THIS WITH EXTAFB EARLY IN NEW YEAR. QNDRIGAN S PREDECESSOR COMMENTED ON "TORTUOUS ROUTE" NEGOTIATIONS WITH EXTAFB AND AMERICANS USUALLY FOLLOW. IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE IF PROVINCE FAILED ACQUIRE ARGENTIA BECAUSE OF FEDERAL RED TAPE OR AMERICAN DOG-IN-MANGER ATTITUDE.

3. BELIEVE IT UNLIKELY THAT EITHER LUNDRIGAN OR EVENING TELEGRAM PLANS FURTHER PUBLICITY ON ARGENTIA FOR TIME BEING. FOR THAT REASON, BELIEVE NO USEFUL PURPOSE TO BE SERVED BY PRESS RELEASE FROM THIS OFFICE OR LETTER TO THE EDITOR TO GIVE USG S POSITION. I STAND READY TO DISCUSS MATTER WITH EDITOR OF EVENING TELEGRAM IF DEPARTMENT OR EMBASSY OTTAWA BELIEVES THIS DESIRABLE. IN MY OPINION NO SUCH DISCUSSION NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE UNLESS THIS EDITORIAL TURNS OUT TO BE KICK-OFF OF CONTINUING SERIES OF ARTICLES OR EDITORIALS.

4. POUCHING 12/22/75 ARTICLE AND 12/27/75 EDITORIAL TO EUR/CAN AND EMBASSY OTTAWA.

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